

Career Development

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People really are our most important resource. People develop and operate our weapon (and financial) systems, ultimately determining mission success. People are an expensive resource. The FY99 President's Budget requested almost \$20 billion for pay and \$2 billion for training and recruiting for the Air Force. It takes a very long lead time to grow a seasoned workforce. We have to aggressively compete to recruit and retain people in a tight labor market. Budget dollars are scarce. We need more funding than is available to maintain readiness and modernize for the future. These are all reasons why it is important to get the most out of the investment that we make for our human resources.

We go out of our way to recruit quality people. Career development allows us to maximize the potential of those people with training, education, and experience.

A successful career takes luck. Luck is where preparation meets opportunity. The Air Force is full of opportunity. Preparation takes hard work and is greatly enhanced when guided by good information.

There are abundant sources of information to guide career development. The Air Force works hard to keep people informed. We have recently created a web site "<http://www.hq.af.mil/SAFFM/menu.htm>" on our SAF/FM Home Page to help people research information concerning career development.

A mentor can be an invaluable resource for any individual interested in career development. A mentor is not a substitute for personal research, personal planning, or hard work. A mentor is very useful for alerting individuals to important considerations that might otherwise be overlooked and for providing a more objective analysis of different courses of action.

Everyone has at least one mentor, their supervisor. Everyone also has a commander or civilian director. We also have NCOICs, superintendents, and senior enlisted advisors. We all have professional organizations we can participate in to network with peers and successful leaders. Take advantage of the help these people offer you.

Be smart. Pay attention to information that impacts your career. Guide your career development efforts with a plan. Bounce your plan off experienced mentors. These actions will allow you to get the most out of the work you put into training, education, and your job that, in turn, becomes the foundation of a successful career.